

The Junior High School Movement in Massachusetts*

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Bridgewater Normal School

IN 1907 the State Normal School at Fitchburg began to organize the seventh and eighth grades of its training school so as to give differentiated work in these two years below the high school. This school, then called "The Practical Arts School," but recently and more properly rechristened "The Junior High School," was designed to give pupils more of an opportunity than the conventional graded school offered to follow the lines of their natural aptitudes, and also better to provide for those pupils who were not likely to enter the high school. Four curriculums were offered which have since constituted the typical program in a full-fledged Junior High School, namely: the academic, preparing for the general high school curriculum with entrance to higher institutions closely in mind; the commercial, fitting for the high school commercial studies, or for elementary office work; the practical arts for boys, offering the ground work for the common trades; and the domestic arts for girls, equipping them for the simpler duties of home-keeping.

In the fall of 1914, Somerville organized one of its grammar schools, the Forster, into a junior high school so as to include grades seven, eight, and nine. The success of the experiment has led the school department to adopt the plan for the whole city. Confronted with the problem of over-crowding in all the elementary schools and the high school, it is believed that the way in which this problem can be solved, in the words of Superintendent Clark, "with the best regard for educational efficiency, of economy, and for convenience of pupils is by establishing four junior high schools so located as to accommodate the entire city." The present ninth grade of the elementary school is to be eliminated and the schools organized on the 6-3-3 plan.

Springfield has what are locally termed "central grammar schools," into each of which the upper grades of a given district

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are gathered. Several of these schools are in reality junior high schools because they offer departmental instruction, some differentiation of work, including a foreign language as an elective, and promotion by subject. The tendency is to transform the ninth grade into a year of secondary work of junior high school character, and to extend more completely and formally this type of organization throughout the city system.

Boston has what are called "intermediate classes" in the various school districts of the city. In these classes children are given "a choice in the seventh and eighth grades between the ordinary curriculum and what might be called the high school preparatory or intermediate plan." Recent reports of Superintendent Dyer and Assistant Superintendent Burke indicate a confidence that in the near future junior high schools will become a fundamental part of the city's school system. Moreover, the report of a committee of experts investigating the Boston schools at the request of the Finance Committee has recommended such organization on the score of both educational efficiency and economy.

Chelsea, like its neighbor, Somerville, has relieved the congestion in its high school and at the same time increased its educational opportunities by inaugurating a junior high school system operating on the 6-3-3 plan. In a large wing of the Shurtleff building and in an extension recently completed at the Williams School, two of the largest school plants in this part of the country, junior high schools have been organized with three curriculums,—general, commercial, and industrial. A third school, the Carter, is also organized on the junior school plan except that the third year class cannot be accommodated until a new building, now under construction, is finished.

Beverly, since 1911, has offered to its eighth grade pupils four different curriculums: the general, business, manual arts, and household arts. Consolidation has been made in different buildings according to the curriculum; the general curriculum being offered at several schools, the business curriculum at one special school, and the manual and household arts curriculums at another special school. These curriculums are open to any pupil in the city promoted from the seventh grade. The school department hopes for the completion of this reorganization through the establishment of a junior high school.

Arlington, a growing suburb of Boston, opened its new high school building a year ago, and assembled in the vacated, old high school building the eighth and ninth grades of the entire town organized as a junior high school. A citizens' committee of five, appointed to investigate and report upon additional school accommodations in a report just published (Nov. 24, 1916) "is of the unanimous opinion that plans for such accommodations should be developed with a view to continuing the junior high school policy recently adopted by the school committee," and "that there should eventually be two junior high school buildings, one at each end of the town."

Reading, another suburban town, has had in operation for about the same length of time the "Intermediate School." For a number of years the upper grammar grades had been consolidated in the Highland School, with the manual arts, physical training, and domestic science available. Conditions, therefore, were particularly favorable to reorganization. Grades seven and eight constitute the new school, the high school remaining unchanged.

The town of Plymouth opened its first junior high school in 1914 in a new four-room building into which were gathered two seventh and two eighth grades. Departmental teaching and differentiated work are offered, and a close articulation is made with the senior high school. Teachers of typewriting, chemistry, and physics divide their time between the two schools. The success of the school is so manifest to the community that they are enlarging the junior high school plant.

Ipswich is another recent example of the establishment of a junior high school, into which the upper grades were gathered instead of being scattered in several different buildings in close proximity to each other.

Franklin had already consolidated the seventh and eighth grades in two schools near the center of the town. By an easy readjustment, all the seventh and eighth grades were brought to the upper floor of one building and a small junior high school established.

In 1912 the school department at Easton brought all the eighth grades of the town into the high school building and by combining them with the freshman class of the high school organized the intermediate school upon the 7-2-3 plan and offered five cur-

riculums: academic, commercial, practical arts, domestic arts, and agriculture. Now that a new eight-room building has provided the necessary room the school is organized on the 6-3-3 plan.

Amherst last year organized in a small separate building in the center of the town a junior high school under conditions favorable to the satisfactory development of junior high school ideals in smaller towns. The fact that the junior high school is on the same lot with the new high school building makes possible the introduction of differentiated courses in the junior high without increased cost for equipment. The junior high pupils make use of the high school gymnasium, printing shop, wood-working shop, cooking room, sewing room and assembly hall. In this way the expensive high school plant is in constant use from 8:30 in the morning until after five o'clock in the afternoon.

Medford is to have a large new building solely for junior high school purposes.

The city of Everett has probably laid the foundation for a junior high school by consolidating the ninth grades in a new central building with some departmental work and a little differentiation of studies. Other places have gathered the highest grammar grade or two into the high school building with the idea of developing six-year high schools. A few cities, Cambridge and Brockton, for example, are hoping to solve temporarily, at least, their problems of over-crowding by enlarging the regular high schools. They contemplate having junior schools eventually and are preparing the way by organizing departmental teaching and differentiated work in some of the elementary schools. Other cities, like Quincy and New Bedford, are looking forward to junior high schools as the sole promise of an effective means of overcoming the difficulties of congestion and at the same time promoting the educational interests of the children.

The list of places mentioned above is not complete because this movement is so steadily progressing that it is difficult to present an up-to-date record of cities and towns committed to this plan.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

Since a former article* was written a little progress in further developing a course for junior high school teachers has been made

* The Training of Teachers for Intermediate Schools.

along two of the four lines mentioned; namely, (1) the grouping of major subjects which normal school students may take, and (2) in defining the aims and selecting to a small extent the sources of the material used in the course in the psychology of early adolescence.

GROUPING OF SUBJECTS

The grouping of subjects in which the student aims to qualify as a departmental teacher can be neither very rigid nor permanent as the situation is at present. We have much to discover by experiment and research with regard to the way the different studies align themselves in the minds of learners as a result of native interests. The two other factors in the determination of this grouping are the demands of the field and the logical contents of the different studies. Since the assignment of subjects to the individual teacher is likely to be varied, or even erratic, owing to either the peculiar requirements of different schools or to the lack of clear-cut ideas as to the proper combinations on the part of principals making the assignments, only the latter factor, subject contents, is regarded as the controlling one.

Two further considerations in arranging the groups are, first, not to specialize too narrowly and, second, not to include so many subjects in any one group that the aim of departmental work is defeated. Somewhere between these two extremes of a very deep knowledge of only one subject on the one hand and a superficial understanding of many subjects on the other will lie a workable mean. Moreover, two demands come from the field, one from large schools having finely differentiated courses where one teacher may be employed upon a single subject all the time, the other from smaller schools where program arrangements necessitate a teacher's carrying two or even more subjects. In teaching in either kind of school, preparation extending beyond one given subject, such as history, is desirable. The teacher needs not only a considerable body of well-organized knowledge of the study she teaches, but she needs also a pretty thorough understanding of intimately and vitally related subjects. For instance, an adequate comprehension of the development of civil government depends upon an understanding of the great movements of history and a broad conception of commercial

geography, to say nothing of locational geography. In other words, whether a teacher gives instruction in one subject or three her vision must be broader than the domain of just one study. When she teaches one subject such as history, her intelligence along kindred lines will make her teaching of her specialty all the more effective. When she teaches in a small school, she can be more readily adapted to a situation calling for specialized work in two or three kindred subjects.

Briefly stated the scope of work includes (1) a general foundation for the first year, (2) specialized work on majors and general work on minors for the second and third years. The groups we have adopted, each subject in a group being a major, are these:

1. Geography, history, and civics.
2. Geography, science (general).
3. Mathematics, science.
4. English, history, and civics.
5. English, geography.
6. English, a modern language.
7. Special combinations of any of the above subjects with gardening or playground work or athletics.

The student elects one group. The required professional studies, psychology, school management, practice teaching, etc., are also majors.

It should be understood that this grouping having for its aim preparation for department teaching is tentative in the sense that further light is likely to be shed upon our problems as we try out these plans. And prompt modification or readjustment will result from suggestions of sound experience.

PSYCHOLOGY

The great tasks of the teacher are to control and to instruct. In the accomplishment of these ends, two factors are vital, first, a just and sympathetic understanding of the children or youths who are to be educated, and second, a sound, broad knowledge of the studies to be taught. Psychology should contribute effectively to the first end by pointing the way to the selection of the best methods of discipline and of teaching for any given stage of development of pupils.

It is now well agreed that the growth of the individual, physically, mentally, socially, and morally, instead of proceeding at

an even and uniform rate from infancy to maturity, may be divided into fairly well-defined stages. Each stage to be sure has certain fundamental characteristics in common with the others but each also has special modifications of these characteristics, all contributing in a specific way to the full development of the individual. (For a comprehensive treatment of these different ages, see Lee's "Play on Education," and Kirkpatrick's "The Individual in the Making.") Furthermore, it is accepted that that period known as adolescence is one of peculiar importance in the passage from babyhood to manhood and that up to the present this vital period has not been taken into account sufficiently in dealing with pupils from eleven to sixteen years of age in our public school practice.

The junior high school teacher dealing, as she must, with this age of early teens ought to know the ins and outs of this period. She should know her boys and girls with all the intimacy, insight, sympathy, and appreciation possible. If she does not know with some thoroughness this interesting human subject all her subject matter, such as history, English, mathematics, and science, will be of little avail. Her great task of character building will be futile and her success as an instructor will be slight.

These considerations define our aim in teaching psychology to those students who are fitting for junior high school teaching. There are three phases to our presentation of the subject:

1. A study of general educational psychology.
2. A study of the stages preceding adolescence, namely:
 - a. Infancy to three years of age.
 - b. From three to six years.
 - c. From six to twelve years, as a preliminary to
3. The more intensive and specific study of the age from twelve to sixteen.

As to materials there is no text so far as the writer knows that can be used in the way we expect to use an ordinary text-book. Furthermore, there are few sources of information upon early adolescence aside from Dr. G. Stanley Hall's great work "Adolescence." No other writer speaks with the same authority and other contributors in this field all pay allegiance to Dr. Hall as the great pioneer and master in this special field. This work is too voluminous to be of much use as a classroom source. His small book entitled "Youth," a very great abridgement of two



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large volumes, is not satisfactory as a text because it is too general. His "Aspects of Child Life" will be found very helpful in a supplementary way.

"The Pedagogical Seminary" in which much of Dr. Hall's material first appeared and which contains other contributions of note in this particular field is the next best source. Mention has been made of Mr. Lee's interesting suggestive book and also of Mr. Kirkpatrick's volume. These two could well be used as texts for the preliminary study covering all the different stages of growth, and so to a small extent could Professor Tyler's "Growth in Education." *Principles of Secondary Education*, edited by Dr. Paul Monroe, is rich in general material and Prof. Whipple's chapter on the psychology and hygiene of adolescence is very adaptable in particular. "The High School Age," by King, and "The Psychology of High School Subjects," by Judd are serviceable.

It will be noticed that these contributions are to the whole period of adolescence and that the exploration of the narrower field of the age of pubescence and the two or three following years, only, is yet to be made. But as the junior high school becomes more and more the agency by which we educate boys and girls during this particular stage, we may be certain that the heightened interest on the part of a growing number of schoolmen will bring forth a larger and better organized body of material for our use in training teachers.